

Testimony IN SUPPORT of:

H.B. No. 5004 - AN ACT IMPLEMENTING EARLY VOTING;

Raised S.B. No. 1057 - AN ACT CONCERNING THE SECRETARY OF THE STATE AND EARLY VOTING;

Raised S.B. No. 1064 - AN ACT CONCERNING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF EARLY VOTING;

S.J. No. 29 - RESOLUTION APPROVING AN AMENDMENT TO THE STATE CONSTITUTION TO ALLOW NO-EXCUSE ABSENTEE VOTING;

H.J. No. 1 - RESOLUTION APPROVING A STATE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT TO ALLOW NO-EXCUSE ABSENTEE VOTING;

Raised H.B. No. 6693 - AN ACT CONCERNING ABSENTEE VOTING

Wednesday, February 22nd, 2023

Dear Senator Mae Flexer (Co-Chair), Representative Matt Blumenthal (Co-Chair), Ranking members Senator Rob Sampson and Representative Gale Mastrofrancesco and esteemed members of the Government Administration & Elections (GAE) Committee:

My name is Michael Carrington, I am a voter from Southbury.

As you know, Early Voting was supported by 60% of CT voters. Even in somewhat conservative towns like Southbury, the clear majority of those who went to the polls this November understood that Early Voting matters. Other states do it, and Connecticut should join those ranks. If we're not trying to make voting easier for everyone, we're just passively making it more difficult for some, particularly our most vulnerable like seniors, working families, etc.

I believe 10 days should be the minimum early voting period, with room for night and weekend hours. Some have proposed longer periods and that's fine, but it's not just about the number of days but total accessibility. In other words, 20 days of M-F 9:00 am – 4:00 pm isn't nearly as effective as 10 days with some weekend hours as well as some early and late hours on certain days. I trust you will devise a fair and inclusive system.

I also believe the State of Connecticut needs to design – and fully fund – a system that all towns can easily and affordably implement. For an Early Voting process to succeed, you cannot force undue burdens and costs on smaller towns. This is another reason why I'm more focused on 10 days of doing it right rather than 20 days of cutting corners.

In addition to Early Voting, I'd like for CT to join the 35 other states that allow No-Excuse Absentee Voting. I'm sure you'll get that done, but I'd like it implemented in the 2023 regular session with all due haste. We were close last session so let's get that across the finish line.

I'd also like you to consider legislation that allows (1) the municipal clerk to deliver absentee ballots to the ballot counters before or at six o'clock p.m. on the day of an election; (2) notification of voters whose absentee ballots may be rejected due to a defect so that voters can either correct the defect or vote in person; (3) prepaid postage for the return of absentee ballots; (4) absentee ballot applications that have been completed and signed to be public records subject to public inspection. I take no position on those, but believe there ought to be testimony and investigation on their relative merits.

For now, let's get Early Voting done and the rest can follow. It's long past time that we make the Nutmeg State a leader in voting rights the same way we are a leader in most other civil rights. As I said in the beginning of my statement, if we're not trying to make voting easier, we're just making it more difficult. We're a better state than that!

Thank you,

Michael Carrington
Southbury, CT